



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

**Ministry of Social Development and Family Services**



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Wednesday, 04 November 2020

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Priority: HIGH**

#### **Piparo Empowerment Centre continues client intake during COVID-19**

For individuals and families who may be experiencing difficulties with their loved ones, due to substance abuse at this time, the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services wishes to remind that the Piparo Empowerment Centre (PEC) continues to accept clients. The Piparo Empowerment Centre is a Therapeutic Community (TC) where males 18 years and over whose lives are negatively affected by substance abuse, support each other in their search for recovery, re-introduction into society and a better life.

Located in the quiet village of Piparo, the Centre, was established in 2001 and has a capacity for 50 persons and provides live-in rehabilitation services over a nine to twelve-month period. Cognizant that many persons may be faced with additional pressures associated with financial challenges at this time, the PEC continues to accept admissions. Upon acceptance at the facility, successful clients are placed in isolation at the PEC and monitored by nursing staff for a period of two weeks, before being fully initiated into the programme.

According to Programme Director Joella Taylor, “Following the announcement of COVID-19 restrictions by the Prime Minister in March, the staff of the PEC was immediately rostered and shifts were rotated to ensure that both staff and residents continue to be protected from exposure to the virus”. This, she said, was necessary due to the ease at which the virus could be spread, and the nature of the challenges that the clients face. She added that strict measures were also effected in the enrolment/intake of new clients; as persons with substance use disorders, tend to develop many medical issues with prolonged use; and many of the centre’s clients have underlying medical issues which stems from chronic substance use disorder.

Since COVID-19 reached our shores, there may be a marked increase in the volume of persons in need of treatment at the facility. Therefore, the Centre has adjusted its protocols for assessment, referrals and intake in general so that support is provided to existing and new clients. In this regard, the Centre has embarked on several initiatives for more engagement and closer partnerships with civil society and non-governmental organisations.

The Piparo Empowerment Centre utilizes the Therapeutic Community (TC) Model and provides the following services:

- Therapeutic Community Counselling
- Peer Counselling
- Intake/Assessment and Referrals
- Individual and Group Counselling
- Family Therapy
- Social Re-integration Training
- Remedial Education
- Vocational Counselling
- Occupational Therapy
- Vocational and Occupational Skills Development (both internal and external)
- Accessing Medical Treatment, Psychiatric Support, Dental Care, and Optical Services
- Job Placement
- Accessing Transitional Housing for graduating residents as necessary
- Follow-up and After Care Services

The Centre receives referrals from all Divisions of the Ministry as well as external organizations and walk-in clients. For more information, persons may call 623 – 2608; Ext 3000 or 3004 or 656 – 0767, or persons may visit the Ministry’s website: [www.social.gov.tt](http://www.social.gov.tt)



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**For more information:**

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